



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED TO VESSELS FISHING IN THE FLORIDA EAST COAST SUBZONE

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the Florida east coast subzone is **closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) March 6, 2009**, through March 31, 2009. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service has determined the 2008/2009 commercial quota of 1,040,625 pounds of king mackerel from this zone will be reached by this date. With this action, the Gulf group king mackerel commercial fishery is closed from the Flagler/Volusia County line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line in Florida. Beginning April 1, the boundary between Atlantic and Gulf groups of king mackerel shifts south and west to the Monroe/Collier County boundary on the Florida west coast. From April 1 through October 31, fish harvested along east coast of Florida, including all of Monroe County, are considered to be Atlantic group king mackerel.

Closure of the commercial king mackerel fishery in the Florida east coast subzone complies with regulations implemented under the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic and is necessary to protect the Gulf group king mackerel resource. In cooperative actions, the state of Florida is expected to close commercial harvest of king mackerel concurrently in adjoining state waters.

During the closure period, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for king mackerel has been issued may fish for or retain Gulf group king mackerel in or from federal waters of the closed subzone. There is one exception, however, for a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat. A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish and a commercial king mackerel permit may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed subzone under the 2-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed subzone may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This includes recreational and tournament-caught fish. The prohibition of sale, however, does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested, landed ashore and bartered, traded, or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.